

Writing the Report

3.10

Introduction

- Some times the hardest part of a decision is convincing others it's the right one but that is what your report is attempting to do.
- It is unlikely but possible you could be asked to use PowerPoint. We will assume you won't but the same principals would apply.

Content of the Report

- Summary of Current situation
- Identify the problem
- Sources and alternatives you considered
- Other factors you took into consideration
- The methods you used to reach your decision
- Your decision
- Justification of decision
- Evaluation
- Conclusion

Awareness of audience

- **Language**
 - Business language is formal and more technical terms are used. You can assume intelligence
- **Font and Size**
 - Same font and size throughout, nothing fancy!
 - Arial or TNR are good
 - Black text is a must!
- **Pictures and layouts**

Summary of Current situation

- It is always good to have an introductory passage to remind the reader of the purpose of your work!
- It allows comparison with success later on and focuses the report.
- It does not need to be a long paragraph merely an introduction.
- You may want to explain any parameters you had

Sources and alternatives methods you considered

- It is good to refer to the sources you used to reach your decisions as it reassures people that all aspects have been covered.
- Again you could show you have considered a number of solutions in your decision making process.
- An explanation of what the model does (not how you made it but its purpose)
- You should also let them know any assumptions you have made about the scenario.

Other factors you took into consideration

- This is both the “gut instinct” side and also things that might be specific to your issue.
- Things such as reliability, bias, changing circumstances, unknown or grey areas of information.

The methods you used to reach your decision

- Clearly state the Options
- How you looked at them - What you did using the model etc
- Show the results of each options you put through the model using graphs and explanation.

Your decision

- Pick the one you think is best and **SELL IT!!**

Justification of decision

- If you have followed all the steps the decision should be justifying itself but be prepared to back your decision up with key points as to why it was the best solution rather than the others.
- Grounds for justification are often: cost/ financial, future savings, efficiency, enhancing company image.
- Bear in mind you are dealing with human beings who will have an agenda!!
- EG if you are putting forward a solution which will lose staff their jobs you need to REALLY show that this is best!

Conclusion

- Restate the decision to be made and argue why your decision meets the requirements.
- You are recapping and arguing well.
- Managers often read the conclusion first!!

Presentation of the report

- You need to consider the awareness of the audience, specifically:
 - Language
 - Font and Size
 - Charts and tables
 - Headings

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Awareness of audience

- Charts, Tables and pictures
 - These help break up a report and can emphasise a point.
 - They must be relevant.
 - They must be monochrome!!
- Headings
 - Plan your report first.
 - Think of a title
 - Think of the sub headings- what format will you use to distinguish categories of sub headings?
 - Use a header and footer

Report Checklist

Have I...

- Set it out with headings and sub headings?
- Used a sensible font
- Used graphical or table representations(if it asks for one or the other follow that otherwise use a graph)
- Completed all the sections:
 - Summary of Current situation
 - Identified the problem
 - Sources and alternatives you considered
 - Other factors you took into consideration
 - The methods you used to reach your decision
 - Your decision
 - Justification of decision
 - Conclusion